

TAFT'S MESSAGE TO CONGRESS

(Continued from page 1)
come will approximate the interest charges upon the investment. On the whole, I should recommend that within certain limits the president be authorized to fix the tolls of the canal and adjust them to what seems to be commercial necessity. The inquiries already made of the chief engineer of the canal show that the present consideration of this question is necessary in order that the commerce of the world may have time to adjust itself to the new conditions resulting from the opening of this new highway.

The next question that arises is as to the maintenance, management and general control of the canal after its completion. It should be premised that it is an essential part of our navy establishment to have the coal, oil and other ship supplies, a drydock and repair shops, conveniently located with reference to naval vessels passing through the canal. Now, if the government, for naval purposes, is to undertake to furnish these conveniences to the navy, and they are conveniences equally required by commercial vessels, there would seem to be strong reasons why the government should take over and include in its management the furnishing, not only to the navy but to the public, drydock and other repair shop facilities, and the sale of coal, oil, and other ship supplies.

The maintenance of a lock canal of this enormous size in a sparsely populated country and in the tropics, where the danger from disease is always present, requires a large and complete and well-trained organization with full police powers, exercising the utmost care. The visitor to the canal who is impressed with the wonderful freedom from tropical diseases on the isthmus must not be misled as to the constant vigilance that is required to preserve that condition. The vast machinery of the locks, the necessary amount of dredging, the preservation of the banks of the canal from slides, the operation and maintenance of the equipment of the railway—will all require a force, not, of course, to be likened in any way to the present organization for construction, but a skilled body of men who can keep in a state of usefulness this great instrument of commerce. Such an organization makes it easy to include within its functions the furnishing of drydock, fuel, repairs and supply facilities to the trade of the world. These will be more essential at the isthmus of Panama than they are at Port Said or Suez, because there are no depots for coal, supplies, and other commercial necessities within thousands of miles of the isthmus.

Another important reason why these ancillary duties may well be undertaken by the government is the opportunity for discrimination between patrons for the canal that is offered where private concessions are granted for the furnishing of these facilities. Nothing would create greater prejudice against the canal than the suspicion that certain lines of traffic were favored in the furnishing of supplies, or that the supplies were controlled by any large interest that might have a motive for increasing the cost of the use of the canal. It may be added that the terminal are not ample enough to permit the fullest competition in respect to the furnishing of these facilities and necessities to the world's trade, even if it were wise to invite such competition and the granting of the concession would necessarily, under these circumstances, take on the ap-

pearance of privilege or monopoly. I cannot close this reference to the canal without suggesting as a wise amendment to the interstate commerce law a provision prohibiting interstate commerce railroads from owning or controlling ships engaged in the trade through the Panama canal. I believe such a provision may be needed to save to the people of the United States the benefits of the competition in trade between the eastern and western seaboard which this canal will be constructed to secure.

Injunction Bill

I wish to renew my urgent recommendation, made in my last annual message, in favor of the passage of a law which shall regulate the issuing of injunctions in equity without notice, in accordance with the best practice now in vogue in the courts of the United States. I regard this of especial importance, first because it has been promised, and second, because it will deprive those who now complain of certain alleged abuses in the proper issuing of injunctions without notice of any real ground for further amendment and will take away all semblance of support for the extremely radical legislation they propose, which will be most pernicious if adopted, will sap the foundations of judicial power, and legalize that cruel social instrument, the secondary boycott.

Judicial Salaries

I further recommend to congress the passage of the bill now pending for the increase in the salaries of the federal judges, by which the chief justice of the supreme court shall receive \$17,500 and the associate justices \$17,000; the circuit judges constituting the circuit court of appeals shall receive \$10,000 and the district judges \$9,000. The cost of living is such, especially in the large cities, that even the salaries fixed in the proposed bill will enable the incumbents to accumulate little, if anything, to support their families after their death.

At its last session congress made provision for the establishment of savings banks by the postoffice department of this government, by which, under general control of trustees, consisting of the postmaster-general, the secretary of the treasury and the attorney-general, the system could be begun in a few cities and towns, and enlarged to cover within its operations as many cities and towns and as large a part of the country as seemed wise. Arrangements have been perfected so that savings banks will be opened in some cities and towns on the first of January, and there will be a gradual extension of the benefits of the plan to the rest of the country.

Wiping Out of Postal Deficit

As I have said, the postoffice department is a great business department, and I am glad to note the fact that under its present management principles of business economy and efficiency are being applied. For many years there has been a deficit in the operations of the postoffice department which has been met by appropriation from the treasury. The appropriation estimated for last year from the treasury over and above the receipts of the department was \$17,500,000. I am glad to record the fact that of that \$17,500,000 estimated for, \$11,500,000 were saved and restored to the treasury. The personal efforts of the postmaster-general secured the effective co-operation of the thousands of postmasters and other postal officers throughout the country in carrying out his plans of reorganization and retrenchment. Thus the postmaster-general has been able to make his estimate of expenses for the present year so low as to keep within the amount the postal service is expected to earn. It is gratifying to report that the

reduction in the deficit has been accomplished without any curtailment of postal facilities. On the contrary, the service has been greatly extended during the year in all its branches.

Extension of Classified Service

Upon the recommendation of the postmaster-general, I have included in the classified service all assistant postmasters, and I believe that this giving a secure tenure to those who are the most important subordinates of postmasters will add much to the efficiency of their offices and an economical administration. A large number of the fourth class postmasters are now in the classified service. I think it would be wise to put in the classified service the first, second and third class postmasters, for the reason that the fourth class postmasters are invariably small and the postmasters are necessarily men who must combine some other business with the postmasterhood, whereas the first, second and third class postmasters are paid a sufficient amount to justify the requirement that they shall have no other business and that they shall devote their entire attention to the postoffice duties.

To classify first, second and third class postmasters would require the passage of an act changing the method of their appointment so as to take away the necessity for the advice and consent of the senate. I am aware that this is inviting from the senate a concession in respect to its quasi executive powers that is considerable, but I believe it to be in the interest of good administration and efficiency of service. To make this change would take the postmasters out of politics; would relieve congressmen who are now burdened with the necessity of making recommendations for these places of a responsibility that must be irksome and can create nothing but trouble; and it would result in securing greater attention to business, greater fidelity and consequently greater economy and efficiency in the postoffices which they conduct.

The Franking Privilege

The unrestricted manner in which the franking privilege is now being used by several federal services and by congress has laid it open to serious abuses, a fact clearly established through investigations recently instituted by the department. While it has been impossible without a better control of franking to determine the exact expense to the government of this practice, there can be no doubt that it annually reaches into the millions. As the first step in the direction of reform, special stamps and stamped envelopes have been provided for use instead of franks in the free transmission of the official mail resulting from the business of the new postal savings system. By properly recording the issuance of such envelopes and stamps accurate records can be kept of the cost to the government of handling the postal savings mail, which is certain to become an important item of expense and one that should be separately determined. In keeping with this plan it is hoped that congress will authorize the substitution of special official stamps and stamped envelopes for the various forms of franks now used to carry free of postage the vast volume of departmental and congressional mail matter.

Second Class Mail Matter

In my last annual message I invited the attention of congress to the inadequacy of the postal rate imposed upon second-class mail matter insofar as that includes magazines, and shown by figures prepared by experts of the postoffice department that the government would be rendering a service to the magazines, costing many millions in excess of the compensation paid. An answer was attempted to this by the representatives of the magazines, and a reply was filed to this answer by the postoffice department. The utter inadequacy of the answer, considered in the light of the reply of the postoffice department, I think must appeal to any fair-minded person. Whether the answer was all that could be said in behalf of the magazines is another question. I agree that the question is one of fact; but I insist that if the fact is as the experts of the postoffice department show, that we are furnishing to the owners of magazines a service worth millions more than they pay for it, then justice requires that the rate should be increased. The increase in the receipts of the department resulting from this change may be devoted to increasing the usefulness of the department in establishing a parcels post and in reducing the cost of first-class postage to one cent. It has been said by the postmaster-general that a fair adjustment might be made under which the advertising part of the magazine should be

charged for at a different and higher rate from that of the reading matter. This would relieve many useful magazines that are not circulated at a profit, and would not shut them out from the use of the mails by a prohibitory rate.

Parcels Post

With respect to the parcels post, I respectfully recommend its adoption on all rural routes, and that eleven pounds—the international limit—be made the limit of carriage in such post, and this with a view to its general extension when the income of the postoffices will permit it and the postal savings bank shall have been fully established. The same argument is made against the parcels post that was made against the postal savings bank—that it is introducing the government into a business which ought to be conducted by private persons, and is paternalism. The postoffice department has a great plant and a great organization, reaching into the most remote hamlet of the United States, and with this machinery it is able to do a great many things economically that if a new organization were necessary it would be impossible to do without extravagant expenditure. That is the reason why the postal savings bank can be carried on at a small additional cost, and why it is possible.

(Continued on page 3)

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I have a recipe for these troubles that you can depend on, and if you want to make a quick recovery, you ought to write and get a copy of it. Many a doctor would charge you \$3.50 just for writing this prescription, but I have it and will be glad to send it to you entirely free. Just drop me a line like this: "D. A. E. Robinson, 11295 Luck Building, Detroit, Mich., and I will send it by return mail in a plain envelope. As you will see when you get it, this recipe contains only pure, harmless remedies, but it has a great healing and pain-conquering power. It will quickly show its power once you use it, so I think you had better see what it is without delay. I will send you a copy free—you can use it and cure yourself at home."

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